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J. G. A. POCOCK

Between Machiavelli and Hume: Gibbon as Civic Humanist and Philosophical Historian

I

"I HAVE NEVER ASPIRED," wrote Gibbon rather insincerely,¹ "to a place in the triumvirate of British historians." The word "British" here, as so often in the eighteenth century, is very little more than a synonym for "Scottish." David Hume and William Robertson were undoubtedly the first and second members of Gibbon's triumvirate—"le Tacite et le Tite-Live de l'Ecosse," as he once put it²—and if the third place had been filled by any other, it must have been by Adam Ferguson or Adam Smith. Gibbon knew all these men well and held their works in high and unfeigned esteem;³ he corresponded with them regularly, even if, like a true southern Englishman, he never went to visit them—Edinburgh was too remote for the man who thought nothing of the journey to Lausanne.⁴ But if he was geographically isolated from the society of his northern peers, Gibbon must have felt an intellectual isolation in an England where he had no peers at all. The only other Englishman who could possibly have been nominated for a place in the triumvirate was the formidable Bishop Warburton, and Gibbon looked upon him as an adversary rather than a rival. His early conversion to Catholicism and the subsequent growth of his irreligious skepticism separated Gibbon from the traditions of Anglican scholarship, which might well have claimed him otherwise; and he attached himself instead to the unfolding patterns of Enlightenment historiography, an international style in many respects, to which nevertheless the Scottish school was imparting a development both local and universal, and of great intellectual power. Gibbon was not, as Ferguson—or even Robertson—was, a theoretical sociologist working in the field of history, nor should he be thought of as applying the science which the Scotsmen worked out in its theoretical purity. He went his own way as a historian, and he sailed under a full spread of canvas into seas they had not attempted to chart; but it will be the aim of this essay to disentangle the elements of philosophic history which are latent in Gibbon's thought and to consider how far they provide guiding ideas in the *Decline and Fall*.

Philosophic history in the eighteenth century may be thought of as a tradition of continuous debate about certain questions; as regards the history of civil society and of man as part of it, these may be referred back to the legacy of civic humanism as mediated by Machiavelli and his successors,⁵ while, as regards the history of religion and civil society, they possessed a different, complicated, and on the whole more recent pedigree. Since the revival of the ideal of active citizenship by Florentine civic

humanists, there had been a gathering reemphasis on the ancient belief that the fulfillment of man's life was to be found in political association, coupled with an increasing awareness of the historical fragility of the political forms in which this fulfillment must be sought. *Virtue* could only be found in a *republic* of equal, active, and independent citizens, and it was a term applied both to the relations between these citizens and to the healthful condition of the personality of each one of them; but the republic was peculiarly exposed to *corruption*—a state of affairs often identified with the dependence of citizens upon the powerful, instead of upon the public authority—and the corruption of the republic must entail the corruption of the individual personality, which could only flourish when the republic was healthy. Machiavelli had seen the relations between virtue and corruption as so intimate and unstable that he had been prepared to use *virtù* in a non-moral and non-civic sense as well as in its more normal meanings. This ambiguity does not directly appear in Gibbon's employment of the word "virtue," but his theory of corruption is profoundly Machiavellian in the sense that it stands in a tradition of debate inherited from the Florentines.

Machiavelli—himself inheriting through Leonardo Bruni and others a tradition of concern with the civic militia—had believed it essential to the citizen's personality and virtue that he should bear arms of his own in the public cause and at the command of public authority. Consequently, a true republic must arm its citizens, and a republic which armed its citizenry must admit them to a share in a government to that extent popular. A republic (such as Rome) must use its arms for conquest and must therefore expand and acquire empire; a "commonwealth for preservation" (such as Venice), which eschewed empire and the armed people, must be content to be ruled by an oligarchy and defended by mercenaries. But the last feature was in itself a sign of corruption; equality among citizens was an equality in arms, and to give up one's arms to another was to give up a vital part of one's capacity for equality, citizenship, and virtue and to become the dependent of those who controlled arms and power. Retainers in a feudal society, *condottieri* in a civic society alike displayed the arms-bearer in a state of social clientage, and both were incompatible with republican virtue. But as the armed popular republic—of which Livian Rome was the paradigm case—expanded its empire and destroyed virtue in others, it might be tempted by wealth and luxury to allow its arms to be exercised by mercenaries or professionals and might be corrupted by the excess of its own virtue. Through Polybius, Machiavelli, Harrington, and Montesquieu can be traced the development of this interpretation of Roman decline.

Harrington, at a turning-point in later Machiavellian theory, anchored the citizen's independence in his arms and his arms in the independence of his property. Land, inherited rather than purchased, furnished the paradigm case of property which guaranteed the independence, virtue, and personality of the individual; and the armies of Livian Rome had been armies of yeoman citizens. The Republic had declined when its institutions failed to guarantee the distribution of conquered lands, and the legionaries had lapsed, first into client dependence on their *imperatores*, whom they had followed in factions and civil wars to obtain their share of land, then into professional service performed for the Caesarian *principes* who had substituted their rule for the Republic. The principate therefore reflected the decline of republican virtue, and neither corrupt citizens nor corrupt soldiers had been able to prevent the growth of civil conflict or the progress of barbarian invasion and the employment of

barbarian mercenaries. Feudal society had represented the culminating phase of the social dependence of the warrior and proprietor, but, from about 1500, vassalage had declined, the independence of the proprietor had been restored, and citizenship had become once more possible.

To Harrington's successors, however, the emancipation of the freeholder from tenure began to appear as a profoundly ambivalent process. It had been brought about by the revival of trade, the growth of arts, leisure, and enlightenment—in themselves excellent things, but tending to encourage the citizen to pay mercenaries to defend him while he enjoyed a polite existence. To be defended by professional soldiers was ultimately incompatible with citizenship, and the growth of standing armies⁶ had been the growth of corruption and absolute monarchy—a decay only held off, even in the free societies of Atlantic Britain, by the deliberate maintenance of a militia of proprietors. This is one reason why the captain of the Hampshire militia was not useless to the historian of the Roman Empire;⁷ why—in the equally subtle thought of Adam Ferguson—the chaplain of a Highland regiment was not useless to the historian of the Roman Republic and of civil society; and why the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States maintains the old language of the militia ideal with such paradoxical results to this day.

But the growth of refinement was the corruption of personality. At this point Machiavelli's unintended legacy to Western thought is seen to have been a paradoxical view of the history of civilization, in which the forces that built up human personality were identical with the forces that undermined it, in ways that point toward the thought of Rousseau. In a commercial society, men became more refined, more enlightened, and more specialized—women aiding them in this to the limits of the capacity that social theory assigned them—but they moved away from the single-minded devotion to the city which characterized the warrior, the citizen, the patriot, and (as Machiavelli had stressed) the pre-Christian pagan. Conversely, if (especially in the intellectual company of Ferguson) the historical sociologist worked his way back into the prehistory of citizenship, he encountered a warrior so devoid of the reflective capacity which only the progress of the arts, the circulation of goods, and the division of labor could bring, as to be altogether incapable of citizenship. There was no refuge to be found in primitivism, and none in progress either; for that which made civilization possible was that which ultimately undermined it. In so paradoxical a vision of history, there were no golden ages, but only golden moments at which the creative had not yet begun to destroy. Gibbon's age of the Antonines is a silver moment of this kind, a moment of relaxation in the downward swing of a civilization.

It could be argued—as it was in varying ways by Montesquieu and (with less assurance) by Hume⁸—that a society making economic progress into an indefinite future could contain its own corruptive and degenerative tendencies and even overcome them; more optimistically still, it could be held that the progress of society offered human personality not merely the prospect of further polishing and refining the passions and appetites, but the more utopian vision of a future (“glorious and paradisaical,” in the language of Gibbon's *bête noire* Joseph Priestley⁹) in which new human capacities would be created, developed, and satisfied. Yet—perhaps because its conception of human nature remained essentially static—the mind of the Enlightenment remained, so far as the future of humanity was concerned, heavily committed to the skepticism and pessimism latent in the civic-humanist tradition as shaped by the Machiavellian lineage. Neither Montesquieu nor Hume, Smith nor Jefferson was

fully able to overcome the proto-Rousseauian vision of a future in which commerce, progress, and specialization corrupted civilization even as they advanced it. Gibbon was no exception to this rule. The *Decline and Fall* recounts the "corruption" of Roman virtue and "the triumph of barbarism and religion,"¹⁰ and this essay will analyze his employment of the first two of these concepts and show him as anchored in the civic-humanist tradition as it had developed from Machiavelli to Hume. If it were possible to turn to the third—to Gibbon's presentation of the civil history of religion—the scene would change, and the civic-humanist analysis, while remaining valid, would be transcended. Gibbon would appear as a *philosophe* rather than a humanist, with a different concern for the history of the human mind; and Hume would appear as his mentor in a new role. That, however, would necessitate another study of at least equal length.

II

There is a sense in which Gibbon presents the decline and fall of the Empire as no more than the working out of forces implicit in the decline and fall of the Republic, the triumph of barbarism and religion as the consequence of the corruption of civic and military virtue. Yet the choice of the Antonine era as the "happy period" from which decline is to be reckoned indicates that there are positive as well as negative aspects to the history of the principate, and our initial problem is to understand the latent paradox in observations such as the following:

Whatever evils either reason or declamation have imputed to extensive empire, the power of Rome was attended with some beneficial consequences to mankind; and the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements of social life.¹¹

The Antonine era is thus defined as a moment at which the forces of degeneration had not yet triumphed over those of progress; but the equation of "improvements" with "vices" is nonetheless clearly established. There is evidence that Gibbon's choice of the Antonine moment was in some respects artificial. The memorable sentence, "If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus,"¹² forms a deliberate antithesis with that from Robertson's *View of the Progress of Society in Europe*, published seven years before the first volume of the *Decline and Fall*: "If a man were called to fix upon the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most calamitous and afflicted, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Theodosius the Great, to the establishment of the Lombards in Italy."¹³

It seems likely that Gibbon worked backwards in time, seeking a period which could be set in Plutarchian opposition to that chosen by Robertson, until he hit upon the eighty years of the "five good emperors." Surveying the *Decline and Fall* after its completion, we know, he regretted this choice and felt that he should have begun from A.D. 69 (the "year of the four emperors"), or earlier, instead of 98-180;¹⁴ but had he done so, the only effect would have been a de-emphasis of the Antonine "silver moment," and a greater stress on forces making for disruption about which he was

never less than explicit. Volume I of the *Decline and Fall* as we have it holds the positive and negative aspects of empire in careful balance:

The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour. The gentle but powerful influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence; the Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government.¹⁵

Once we are acquainted with the patterns of eighteenth-century historical thinking, we can read this passage correctly. Military virtue (which was part of civic virtue in its original form) is now to be found only among the legions on the frontiers; in the provinces and cities is to be found something else, the refinement of manners which can develop only where there is peace and wealth, but is liable to “abuse” where there is “luxury.” There is a relation between “abuse” and the loss of liberty; the “free constitution” of the Republic is now only an “image,” preserved in appearance by the circumstance that emperors and senators are capable—as in the era recorded by Tacitus they were not—of “decent reverence.” There is even a hint that something has gone wrong with the separation of powers: since “all” executive power has “devolved on the emperors,” the senate does not in reality “possess the sovereign authority.”

Gibbon continues to reveal to us how this state of affairs came about:

The principal conquests of the Romans were achieved under the republic; and the emperors, for the most part, were satisfied with preserving those dominions which had been acquired by the policy of the senate, the active emulation of the consuls, and the martial enthusiasm of the people.¹⁶

The triad in the second part of the sentence furnished a clear description of Roman *virtus* as it had been manifested in the “mixed constitution” of Polybius—when, as Machiavelli and Montesquieu had made clear, it had been inseparable from conquest and the acquisition of dominion. Gibbon praises—though never unequivocally—the decision of the *principes* to halt expansion at the existing frontiers—“Happily for the repose of mankind, the moderate system recommended by the wisdom of Augustus, was adopted by the fears and vices of his immediate successors”¹⁷—but makes it clear that, in this decision, Rome has passed, in Machiavellian terminology, from being “a commonwealth for expansion” to becoming instead “a commonwealth for preservation.” The latter, in Machiavelli’s view, were oligarchical and employed mercenaries; but the end of the Republic and the rise of the principate meant more than the conversion of Rome into a Venice. Conquest and liberty had been inseparable while they both depended upon the free and martial emulation of the senate and the people; with the abandonment of conquest, liberty began to be withdrawn from each.

In the purer ages of the commonwealth, the use of arms was reserved for those ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and some share in enacting those laws, which it was their interest, as well as duty, to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was lost in extent of conquest, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade.¹⁸

This passage is purely Machiavellian, and the closing words even echo the pun implicit in his "*arte della guerra*."¹⁹ It should be observed that conquest, the effect of freedom, is now fatal to it: it was the extension of the Republic that professionalized the legionaries and made them the clients of Marius or Sulla, Pompey or Caesar. Augustus is not to be blamed for this development, but his decision to halt expansion froze, instead of reversing, it and made the professional army the foundation of the principate. In much detail, in his third chapter, Gibbon recounted how Augustus exploited constitutional forms to invest himself and his successors with permanent control over the armies and a permanent monopoly of the essential prerogatives of executive power. This both was and was not a military despotism; or rather, it was, but masqueraded as something else; and insincerity was of its essence and could never be altogether eliminated. It is true that the luridly Tacitean portrait of Augustus as hypocrite, given in chapter 3,²⁰ is mitigated by the observation that the effects of rule actually transformed him from a ferocious tyrant into a *pater patriae*;²¹ and it is true that the long and carefully written encomia on the five good emperors leave us in no doubt that their virtue was real and not assumed. But it is nonetheless made clear that virtue was that which made them observe a restraint which nothing in the constitution obliged them to observe, and was therefore in the last analysis a private, not a public, virtue. The benevolent despot has nothing but his benevolence to rely on.

The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose character and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom.

. . . The ideal restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display the virtues, but could never correct the vices, of the emperor. The military force was a blind and irresistible instrument of oppression; and the corruption of Roman manners would always supply flatterers eager to applaud, and ministers prepared to serve the fear or the avarice, the lust or the cruelty, of their masters.²²

The principate was therefore corrupt, even where it was most virtuous, and there was an inevitability about the forces which ensured that a Marcus Aurelius would be followed by a Commodus sooner or later. But the root of corruption lay not just in the operations of unchecked despotism, but in the separation of military from civic virtue which had ensured it. The Republic had abandoned the armies to the Caesars because the soldiers had ceased to be citizens. After the sentence in which we learn—the equation of progress with degeneration appearing once more—that war had been “improved into an art, and degraded into a trade,” we hear that as the cities became more luxurious, the legions were increasingly recruited from the countryside,²³ and it soon follows that:

That public virtue which among the ancients was denominated patriotism, is derived from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of which we are members. Such a sentiment, which had rendered the legions of the republic almost invincible, could make but a very feeble impression on the mercenary servants of a despotic prince; and it became necessary to supply that defect by other motives, of a different, but not less forcible nature; honour and religion.²⁴

With the mention of "honour" we encounter a new element in Gibbon's eighteenth-century sociology: the quality which Montesquieu had identified as the *principe* of monarchy, but which, in Gibbon's hands, will emerge as the self-love that forms the only social passion of which barbarians are capable. The rustic and half-barbarous soldiers of the Empire—Gibbon will insist repeatedly on their "barbarian," "Illyrian," and "peasant" character,²⁵ but here calls them simply "peasant or mechanic"²⁶—learn an ethos of ambition and emulation in which their actions confer "glory or disgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army" to which they belong. Gibbon is careful not to use the term "virtue" of what is merely "honour," but leaves us in no doubt that discipline and military spirit are a civilized, not a primitive, characteristic. "From such laudable arts did the valour of the Imperial troops receive a degree of firmness and docility, unattainable by the impetuous and irregular passions of barbarians."²⁷ This antithesis is many times repeated. As for the "religion" which is associated with "honour," it is the worship of the eagles by the legions which carry them, and it is consequently as remote as can be from the "religion" that will be joined with "barbarism" in characterizing post-Roman society. More than anything else, it resembles the religion of auguries and auspices which Machiavelli had seen as maintaining the military virtue of the legions of the early Republic; and yet the difference between the two is profound. The legions of the Republic were composed of citizens, those of the Empire of mercenaries; the latter, and their religion, were therefore capable only of honor in the room of virtue. The divorce of military and civic principle leads to the degeneration of each. Gibbon starts his history at a moment when senatorial virtue, shown in its decay by Tacitus, is already all but extinct, and the virtue of the principate, raised to philosophical but insecure heights by Marcus Aurelius, is about to receive a fatal blow at the hands of Commodus. He proceeds to show how the legions are first led, by the fatal flaw in the Augustan institution, to tear the fabric of civil government apart, and then, rallying what is left of their honor and discipline in the era of the first Gothic invasions, are led under the great Illyrian soldier-emperors²⁸ to attempt the reform of the Empire, but succeed only in militarizing it and rendering it more despotic. Later volumes will recount the slow process by which the legions lose even the capacity to defend the Empire; but Gibbon insists upon it even when displaying Roman power at its height. A footnote to his account of military engines in chapter 1 remarks, in language itself thoroughly Machiavellian, "The use of them in the field gradually became more prevalent, in proportion as personal valour and military skill declined with the Roman empire. When men were no longer found, their place was supplied by machines."²⁹

III

The cessation of conquest led to a world at peace, in which commerce and the arts might flourish and refine men's manners even as they corrupted men's virtue. The legions "preserved a military spirit, at a time when every other virtue was oppressed by luxury and despotism,"³⁰ and we might look upon them as the guardians of a world of whose corruption they were the cause, and which would finally corrupt even them. But Gibbon's account of the relations between progress and decay is never simple; it is complicated first by the ambiguities of his attitude toward commerce and luxury, and second by the mounting importance of the theme of religion. At the end of chapter 7 he pauses, at the celebration of the secular games by Philip the Arab, to

review the degeneration of virtue since the time of Romulus,³¹ and to insert two chapters on the Persians and the Germans respectively, aimed at introducing the external forces which will bring the Empire down. That on the Persians is largely concerned with Zoroastrianism and belongs properly to Gibbon's history of religion; that on the Germans is a systematic sociology of barbarism. It is grounded in eighteenth-century theory about the successive stages of human history, and upon the perception that the history of economic production may be connected with the history of the human psyche.³² It has therefore as much to do with commerce as with barbarism, and is linked in this way with the older humanist theme of the corruption of virtue.

Gibbon tells us that the Germans of the age before the invasions—who are, throughout this chapter, identified with the Germans described by Tacitus—

were unacquainted with the use of letters; and the use of letters is the principal circumstance that distinguishes a civilised people from a herd of savages incapable of knowledge or reflection. Without that artificial help, the human memory soon dissipates or corrupts the ideas intrusted to her charge; and the nobler faculties of the mind, no longer supplied with models or with materials, gradually forget their powers; the judgment becomes feeble and lethargic, the imagination languid or irregular.³³

They were also unacquainted with the use of money as a medium of exchange:

The value of money has been settled by general consent to express our wants and our property, as letters were invented to express our ideas; and both these institutions, by giving a more active energy to the powers and passions of human nature, have contributed to multiply the objects they were designed to represent. . . . In a civilised state, every faculty of man is expanded and exercised; and the great chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the several members of society. The most numerous portion of it is employed in constant and useful labour. The select few, placed by fortune above that necessity, can, however, fill up their time by the pursuits of interest or glory, by the improvement of their estate or of their understanding, by the duties, the pleasures, and even the follies of social life. The Germans were not possessed of these varied resources.³⁴

Gibbon—whose social outlook, throughout his life, was that of a *rentier*, rather than a proprietor or an entrepreneur³⁵—is plainly not much interested in the development of a Protestant ethic; the function of a commercial society, in his view, is to permit the growth of a leisured and civilized ruling class. In these passages he joins a tradition, stemming in a number of ways from Locke, but developed by the Scottish school to a point where it is hard to tell whether Hume, or Ferguson, or Smith is chiefly in Gibbon's mind at this moment; it was a tradition that found the key to history in the growth of means of production, stimulating in turn the growth of social intercourse, exchange, and interdependence, the objects before the human mind and its powers of perception, the passions which focused themselves upon these objects, and the powers of rational understanding which grew through reflection upon the objects and the passions alike. It is perhaps the secret of this process that the passions were moderated as they were developed; as they increased in number and diversity they became increasingly the subject of reflection and refinement, and the growth of a commercial society was the growth of a polished society.

Because the primitive Germans lacked letters and money, they could not control their passions; but it also followed that these passions were few, and by a strange

paradox that it was their weakness as much as their strength which made them hard to control. Gibbon quotes Tacitus—whom he regarded as a “philosophical” historian in the eighteenth-century sense of “sociological”³⁶—to the effect that the Germans

delight in sloth, they detest tranquility. The languid soul, oppressed with its own weight, anxiously required some new and powerful sensation; and war and danger were the only amusements adequate to its fierce temper. The sound that summoned the German to arms was grateful to his ear. It roused him from his uncomfortable lethargy, gave him an active pursuit, and, by strong exercise of the body, and violent emotions of the mind, restored him to a more lively sense of his existence.³⁷

A medieval moralist would have said that the Germans were employing *ira* as the remedy for *accidia*; to a modern it may appear that Gibbon has discovered *Angst*—appropriately enough, in its homeland. But we should rather emphasize the essentially materialist nature of his social theory; the psychology of the primitive Germans is deduced directly from their means of production. Because they were hardly even agriculturalists—Gibbon is specific on this point³⁸—the Germans were proprietors of neither land nor goods; and the warrior’s unstable lethargy springs from the fact that he had neither labor to occupy his body nor property to occupy his mind—still less to give him leisure to reflect on his social existence. Gibbon quotes Tacitus, again, as saying that the tribal authorities could order the redistribution of land-holdings every year, but could not order the physical punishment of any freeman; and he comments: “A people thus jealous of their persons, and careless of their possessions, must have been totally destitute of industry and the arts, but animated with a high sense of honour and independence.”³⁹

The concept of honor that now appears is primitivist in the extreme, and very far removed—though perhaps along a sequence still cyclical rather than stadial—from the military ethos which is all that is left to the legions when virtue has been withdrawn. Germanic honor precedes virtue because it precedes property and productive labor; it is the only mode of social consciousness possible to the warrior who has no productive function and can socialize his own passions only by seeking glory in the eyes of his fellows. Pre-feudal and pre-chivalric values appear at this point, and the ethos of the German war-band is not altogether unlike the legion’s worship of its eagle;⁴⁰ its social and psychic foundations are, however, entirely different. In a passage of interest to the history of intersexual perception, Gibbon applies his theory of primitive honor to explain why German women were equal and respected, but as savagely warlike as the men and ferociously chaste into the bargain: “Conscious pride taught the German females to suppress every tender emotion that stood in competition with honour, and the first honour of the sex has ever been that of chastity.”⁴¹ In a more productive society, women are more feminine and more refined; they contribute significantly to the growth of refinement; but they are also less chaste, since that virtue’s “most dangerous enemy is the softness of the mind. The refinements of life corrupt while they polish the intercourse of the sexes.”⁴²

The paradox of progress has reappeared, and it runs all through Gibbon’s analysis of barbarism in this chapter. Honor precedes virtue because it precedes property; virtue is possible only when we perceive what connects us with society; property gives that connection a tangible shape, and as commercial progress multiplies the shapes it can take, the social passions are themselves both multiplied and refined. But virtue is pursued by the terrible paradox that property simultaneously gives govern-

ment power over us, and corrupts while it confers the independence of mind which alone enables us to resist government:

A warlike nation like the Germans, without either cities, letters, arts, or money, found some compensation for this savage state in the enjoyment of liberty. Their poverty secured their freedom, since our desires and our possessions are the strongest fetters of despotism. "Among the Suiones (says Tacitus), riches are held in honour. They are *therefore*⁴³ subject to an absolute monarch, who, instead of intrusting his people with the free use of arms, as is practised in the rest of Germany, commits them to the safe custody not of a citizen, or even of a freedman, but of a slave. The neighbours of the Suiones, the Sitones, are sunk even below servitude; they obey a woman." In the mention of these exceptions, the great historian sufficiently acknowledges the general theory of government.⁴⁴

In passages such as this, Gibbon draws close to the romantic pessimism ascendant, if never quite dominant, in Ferguson and Rousseau: to a theory of history based on a perceived paradox that what moves society away from savagery and toward virtue and civilization simultaneously undermines its foundations with corruption, so that even virtue and freedom never quite coincide—the latter tending toward savagery, the former toward corruption. We might expect him at this point to present Roman civilization as a society destroyed by its own success and to admit that the growth of commerce which refines civilization renders it incapable of resisting its enemies within or without. But Gibbon avoids formulating this paradox—present as it is in the structure of his thought—as a general law applicable either to Roman society or to his own; and the means by which he avoids doing so throw light both on his ideological predispositions and on—what is not the same thing—his perception and planning of the structure of the *Decline and Fall*.

To begin with, while he is prepared to admit with all his authors that luxury was among the chief causes of the corruption of Rome, he is at some pains to deny either that luxury is a simple consequence of the growth of commerce, or that its corruptive effects have necessarily an economic explanation. In chapter 2, while describing the Antonine world at its height, he remarks that the industry of the people was largely taken up with producing consumer goods for a conspicuously consuming rich:

Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been severely arraigned by the moralists of every age; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of mankind, if all possessed the necessities, and none the superfluities, of life. But in the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property. The diligent mechanic, and the skilful artist, who have obtained no share in the division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the possessors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a sense of interest, to improve those estates, with whose produce they may purchase additional pleasures.⁴⁵

Gibbon has returned to the defense of a polite society, in which the function of labor is to support a refined and leisured class; and he proceeds to deny that, in the Roman case, such a society impoverished itself even by the export of silver to purchase luxury goods from India⁴⁶—a perennial topic of debate in eighteenth-century Britain. But to deny that the Roman Empire impoverished itself is not to deny that it corrupted itself; and when Gibbon says, a page or two later, that "it was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity

the latent causes of decay and corruption,"⁴⁷ he is conceding that Antonine peace and prosperity had been bought at the price of a despotism which separated military from civic virtue, and so corrupted both. In the last analysis, a virtuous society had something other to do than to ensure the public felicity; it was concerned with harder matters—with discipline, conquest, and the assertion and preservation of freedom—and Gibbon knew that the contradiction had not been fully overcome. Yet it could be affirmed that not commerce, but despotism, was the cause of luxury; and we find him doing this in those climactic chapters of the second and third volumes (published in 1781) which conduct the narrative from the death of Theodosius to the sack of the city by Alaric. In chapter 27, for example, we find this:

If it can be affirmed, with any degree of truth, that the luxury of the Romans was more shameless and dissolute in the reign of Theodosius than in the age of Constantine, perhaps, or of Augustus, the alteration cannot be ascribed to any beneficial improvements which had gradually increased the stock of national riches. A long period of calamity or decay must have checked the industry and diminished the wealth of the people; and their profuse luxury must have been the result of that indolent despair which enjoys the present hour and declines the thoughts of futurity. The uncertain condition of their property discouraged the subjects of Theodosius from engaging in those useful and laborious undertakings which require an immediate expense, and promise a slow and distant advantage.⁴⁸

If the Romans were luxurious, it was because they were not laborious and did not practice the virtues of industry, prudence, and frugality; and this is the context in which Gibbon remarks that "the effeminate luxury, which infected the manners of courts and cities, had instilled a secret and destructive poison into the camps of the legions"⁴⁹ and recounts the last stages in the disappearance of military virtue, of which luxury is as much the effect as the cause. In chapter 31, that in which the sleeping inhabitants of Rome are "awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet,"⁵⁰ Gibbon introduces a long passage from Ammianus Marcellinus describing the luxury, corruption, and superstition of the senatorial class. But he prefaces it with the following passage:

The opulent nobles of an immense capital, who were never excited by the pursuit of military glory, and seldom engaged in the occupations of civil government, naturally resigned their leisure to the business and amusements of private life. At Rome commerce was always held in contempt; but the senators, from the first age of the republic, increased their patrimony and multiplied their clients by the lucrative practice of usury. . . . The greater part of the nobles, who dissipated their fortunes in profuse luxury, found themselves poor in the midst of wealth, and idle in a constant round of dissipation. Their desires were constantly gratified by the labour of a thousand hands; of the numerous train of their domestic slaves, who were actuated by the fear of punishment; and of the various professions of artificers and merchants, who were more powerfully impelled by the hopes of gain.⁵¹

And immediately after the passage from Ammianus, Gibbon observes:

In populous cities, which are the seats of commerce and manufactures, the middle ranks of inhabitants, who derive their subsistence from the dexterity or labour of their hands, are commonly the most prolific, the most useful, and, in that sense, the most respectable part of the community. But the plebeians of Rome, who disdained such sedentary and servile arts, had been oppressed from the earliest times by the weight of

debt and usury, and the husbandman, during the term of his military service, was obliged to abandon the cultivation of his farm. The lands of Italy, which had been originally divided among the families of free and indigent proprietors, were insensibly purchased or usurped by the avarice of the nobles; and in the age which preceded the fall of the republic, it was computed that only two thousand citizens were possessed of any independent substance. Yet as long as the people bestowed by their suffrages the honours of the state . . . their conscious pride alleviated in some measure the hardships of poverty; and their wants were seasonably supplied by the ambitious liberality of the candidates. . . .⁵²

It was only when they gave up their political rights that poverty and venality made them into a degenerate and polyglot mob of dependents. In both these passages, Gibbon is projecting his image of an unproductive society plagued by debt into the heroic age of the early Republic—a footnote at this point refers to “those primitive times, which have been so undeservedly praised”⁵³—and has indicated that the plebeians brought it on themselves by their contempt for useful industry. In thus apparently undercutting the conventional image of agrarian virtue, of which he has made such extensive use elsewhere, he is substituting a “modern” for an “ancient” account of how Roman virtue prepared the way for its own corruption. To thinkers in the “ancient” tradition that stemmed from Polybius, it seemed that the influx of wealth gained from conquest and empire had been too much for the institutions of the agrarian Republic, so that yeoman land had been absorbed by *latifundia* and yeomen warriors had become clients and mercenaries. Gibbon appears to be indicating that the yeoman warrior, who preferred serving in the legions for the conquest of new lands to the productive cultivation of his own farm for the market, had only himself to thank if neither he nor the nobleman could join in a productive market relationship and were compelled instead to play the mutually destructive roles of debtor and creditor, from which all evils followed. In such a society, political freedom would maintain personal virtue and the freedom of the personality, while economic virtues had not developed to the point of doing so.

Montesquieu and Hume had examined the idea that the economic base of ancient society and its virtue had been too narrow, while offering the image of a modern economy in which productive energy, refinement of manners, and civil liberty of a non-participatory kind took virtue's place. But there was still no really satisfactory account of how civil liberty could flourish for long without classical virtue, of how commercial society might generate its own form of political virtue, or—even though Adam Smith published the *Wealth of Nations* in the same year as the first volume of the *Decline and Fall*—of how the workings of economic society might themselves furnish satisfactory foundations for the human social personality. Gibbon was a philosophical historian, but his business was not to construct a general theory of the progress of human society; he had undertaken the sufficiently gigantic task of narrating and explaining the decline of the ancient world, and had resolved before his first volume appeared that he would not confine himself to the fall of the Western Empire. But in an age of philosophical history, he did not dream of denying that “this awful revolution may be usefully applied to the instruction of the present age”;⁵⁴ and as one who was, disclaim it though he might, one of a triumvirate with Robertson and Hume, he did not deny that ancient and modern history were to be linked by an account of the progress—which might also be the corruption—of civil society. His handling of the themes of barbarism, luxury, and commerce shows that he had in his

mind the makings of such an account; yet we are going to have to look for reasons why he never quite supplied it.

IV

At the end of chapter 38, in his third volume and in that part of the *Decline and Fall* published in 1781, Gibbon appended his "General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West," which is both a review of the causes of that part of the decline and an inquiry into the prospects of such a calamity recurring to afflict the civilization of modern Europe. Though it contains many of his more striking pronouncements, this essay is generally considered to be unsatisfactory, for the reason that it appears thin and simplistic when considered as a review of the themes Gibbon has been treating. This thinness is apparent in several ways. The "General Observations" have only three things to say: that the nomad invaders will not return; that modern Europe is not a despotism; and that discoveries in the arts and sciences, once made, can never be entirely lost.⁵⁵ We should consider the second of these dicta—the third is really an appendage to it—before returning to examine the first. It has been apparent from the present inquiry that Gibbon ranked the leveling and depersonalizing effects of despotism well above the consequences of luxury and leisure as causes of the corruption of Rome; the principate, and the monarchy erected by Diocletian and Constantine which succeeded it, deprived its subjects of both civil and military virtue, and so of the ability to defend themselves. What he most strongly emphasizes in the "General Observations" is that:

Europe is now divided into twelve powerful, though unequal kingdoms, three respectable commonwealths, and a variety of smaller, though independent states: the chances of royal and ministerial talents are multiplied, at least, with the number of its rulers. . . . The abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence of fear and shame; republics have acquired order and stability; monarchies have imbibed the principles of freedom, or, at least, of moderation; and some sense of honour and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times. In peace, the progress of knowledge and industry is accelerated by the emulation of so many active rivals: in war, the European forces are exercised by temperate and undecisive contests.⁵⁶

"If a savage conqueror," Gibbon continues, "should issue from the deserts of Tartary," he will not encounter a society robbed of all virtue by the empire of a single domination. The cycle described by Machiavelli and the theorists of *translatio imperii* has been broken; Europe is not an empire, but "a great republic,"⁵⁷ a *république des patries* which preserve one another's virtue and industry by challenging them. This, incidentally, shows that the loss of America by Britain was not a decline and fall in the Roman sense.

Gibbon in 1781 did not know that he would live to see this republic destroyed by forces exploding from within; he did not consider the American Revolution as in any way lessening America's capacity to act as a reinforcement of Europe.⁵⁸ But there was, and long had been, a widespread and vocally expressed fear that the progress of commerce, luxury, and the arts was rendering it ever harder to safeguard liberty against corruption; whatever Gibbon's American contemporaries felt about commerce,⁵⁹ they certainly saw their revolution as a last-ditch stand against globe-encircling corruption; and though we can see pretty clearly why Gibbon did not share

this fear, it is less easy to see why he did not take the trouble to refute it. We know, that is, that he thought despotism, not commerce, the main cause of corruption and luxury; we have uncovered an argument which he could have used to contend that, while the corruption of ancient and agrarian virtue was the correct explanation of the Roman decline, both virtue and its corruption were phenomena of the ancient economy and need not recur in the modern. But it cannot be maintained that this argument controls the explanations given in the first three volumes of the *Decline and Fall*, or that it recurs in the "General Observations" as a reason why modern commercial society should not fear corruption.

The "General Observations" disappoint us in another way. The emphasis given to the reflection that the Russians have conquered the steppe and begun to plough it, that Attila and Genghis Khan will not return, seems abstract and unreal. There are two reasons why we should feel as we do. The way in which Gibbon has initially laid the scene for the *Decline and Fall*, our own knowledge of the thinking of eighteenth-century philosophical historians, our foreknowledge that he will declare that he has recounted "the triumph of barbarism and religion" dispose us to expect, first, a study of whether the processes of Roman decay are likely to recur, and, second, an inquiry into how the interactions between the barbarian invaders and the Christian religion have affected and continue to affect the history of post-Roman Europe. But we receive neither. We are not told whether Europe will become corrupt like Rome, or how it is coping in its enlightened age with the relics of barbarism and superstition; and to be told instead that nomadism is nearly extinct in Central Asia seems a singularly barren approach to both ancient and modern history. But if we consider how it is that we are offered this fare, we shall learn something about the *Decline and Fall* which may still be worth remembering.

Gibbon never returned to the analysis of barbarian society with the depth of sociological and psychological penetration displayed in the chapter on the Germans. When he next considered the phenomena of barbarism, it was in chapter 26 (the last of Volume II in the 1781 printing), which is devoted to "the manners of the pastoral nations," the Huns, Scythians, and Central Asian nomads in general. Concerning these, Gibbon has to say that, as they are shepherds, they are savages,

and the savage tribes of mankind, as they approach nearer to the condition of animals, preserve a stronger resemblance to themselves and to each other. The uniform stability of their manners is the natural consequence of the imperfection of their faculties. Reduced to a similar situation, their wants, their desires, their enjoyments still continue the same; and the influence of food or climate, which, in a more improved state of society, is suspended or subdued by so many moral causes, most powerfully contributes to form and to maintain the national character of barbarians.⁶⁰

The discovery of a "shepherd," pastoral and pre-agrarian, stage in social evolution was one of the most recent and exciting discoveries in conjectural history;⁶¹ but to Adam Smith it had appeared that this was the stage in which the specialization of function and the beginnings of political power first took effect.⁶² To Gibbon, however, it was altogether barren and static. He could visualize world history from A.D. 400 to 1400 as the interactions of the Desert with the Sown, of the nomads of the steppe with the settled agricultural empires from China to Rome.⁶³ He was not Occidentocentric at all; but he never allowed to the nomads any epithet above that of "savages," or—with one great but partial exception—any social capacity beyond that of mobilizing destructive power.

And the analysis of German society in chapter 9 had clearly shown it to have been a society of herdsmen rather than of farmers. As we follow Gibbon's account of the settlement of the Goths and Franks in the western provinces, it is noteworthy that the barbarians are referred to as "shepherds,"⁶⁴ and excluded by implication from any capacity for that agriculture which Gibbon knew to be "the parent of manufactures,"⁶⁵ of arts, and of letters. To call the German a "shepherd" could hardly equate him with a pastoral nomad from the steppe, but it did have the effect of de-emphasizing his participation either in that myth of agrarian, pre-commercial, and very often "Gothic" virtue, on which European and American thinking still largely relied, or in the more serious histories of the progress of society from barbarism through agriculture to commerce, which were being written by Gibbon's peers of the Scottish school. That history was generally located in the former Western Empire, in the interactions between Gallo-Roman agriculture, Gothic warrior feudalism, and the reviving imperial, urban, and ecclesiastical institutions of the later Empire. It would be a wild exaggeration to say that Gibbon denied that this progress of society had taken place; what can be affirmed quite certainly, and demonstrated from his projection and execution, is that he had decided not to write its history, and that we should not read the *Decline and Fall* as if he had intended to do so.

Montesquieu and Mably, Robertson and Hume—he knew all but the first of these personally—had been before him in studying or writing the history of the *respublica christiana* which had succeeded the *respublica romana* in the West, and had been transformed into the *république européenne* of his own times. In the last three volumes of his history, Gibbon carried out the plan he had announced when introducing the first in 1776; he carried the narrative from the fall of the Western Empire to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, keeping Byzantine history as the central theme, developing an extended treatment of Arab and Turkish Islam as the true adversary of Byzantium, and treating medieval Western history only as it contributed to the great theme of the decline of the Eastern Empire, and the lesser, if enormously moving, theme of the decay of the city of Rome through the medieval period to the sack of 1527.⁶⁶ In short, while we may read Gibbon's later chapters for many important observations on the familiar subject matter of Latin and post-medieval history as seen through eighteenth-century eyes, we have to remember that there is a fundamental sense in which the Roman-Germanic theme has been relegated to the margins of the later *Decline and Fall*.

It is not only our own Occidentalism which makes it difficult for us to accept this. All that we know of eighteenth-century philosophical history encourages us to believe that when Gibbon writes in chapter 2: "The fierce giants of the north broke in, and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom; and after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science,"⁶⁷ or in chapter 16: "During the ages of ignorance which followed the subversion of the Roman empire in the West, the bishops of the Imperial city extended their dominion over the laity as well as clergy of the Latin church. The fabric of superstition which they had erected . . . was at length assaulted by a crowd of daring fanatics, who, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, assumed the popular character of reformers,"⁶⁸ he intends to give us the history of these processes; we ignore his very explicit declarations that he has another purpose. We know, what is quite true, that Gibbon had no sympathy for Byzantine civilization and no belief that it had any inner dynamic of its own; we do not inquire into the extraordinary resolution that kept him for seven years writing its history and that of an Islam he liked only a little better.

When we hear the famous phrase "the triumph of barbarism and religion," we think instinctively of the Gothic invaders and the bishops of the Western churches; we do not consider that—whatever resonance Gibbon intended the phrase to have⁶⁹—a reader of all six volumes would have a very good case for applying it to the Arabs rather than the Germans, and to Islam rather than Christianity.

What differentiates the Arabs from all other pastoral nomads is that a prophet-legislator arose among them and founded a new religion and a new civil order; what differentiates Islam from Christianity is that the former arose among heroic and superstitious barbarians, hardly (though sufficiently) touched by city life,⁷⁰ whereas the latter arose in the decay of an ancient civic order and an ancient civic religion. These are the themes that interest Gibbon as a philosopher. The heirs of primitive Islam—themselves much corrupted by empire—succeeded in overthrowing the bureaucratic and ecclesiastical hierarchy founded by Constantine, and very little changed after eleven centuries. These are the themes around which Gibbon organized the later volumes of the *Decline and Fall*. As a philosophic historian of Western society, he laid down the pen—except for a limited series of specific purposes—where Robertson had earlier taken it up. He then found new, gigantic, if philosophically recalcitrant, themes, moving into the history of Asia as Robertson moved into that of America; and this had been his intention as early as 1776. If we need to reexamine the *Decline and Fall* with the later volumes at the center of our perception, we need to read the work as its author planned and executed it.

REFERENCES

Note: All references to the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (DF) are to the chapter and page number of the seven-volume edition of J. B. Bury (2nd ed., London, 1902).

¹*Memoirs of My Life*, ed. Gabriel Bonnard (New York, 1966), p. 159. Compare the letters to Robertson in *The Letters of Edward Gibbon*, ed. J. E. Norton (London, 1956), II, p. 361, and III, p. 100, in which "a place in the triumvirate," even in the role of "Lepidus," is positively asserted.

²*Letters*, II, p. 107. Cf. the references to the low standing of English as compared to Scots historians.

³The Index to the *Letters* may be consulted for references to, and correspondence with, both Ferguson and Smith. Gibbon praised *The Wealth of Nations*, but is said to have thought less well of the *Essay on the History of Civil Society*.

⁴*Letters*, II, pp. 359-60 and III, pp. 99-100.

⁵See J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975). The next few paragraphs abridge this work's argument.

⁶Lois G. Schwoerer, "No Standing Armies!" *The Anti-Army Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Baltimore, 1974).

⁷*Memoirs of My Life*, p. 117.

⁸Montesquieu, *Esprit des lois*, XIX. 27; Hume, *Essays*, II, 1 and 2; *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 488-98.

⁹Priestley, *Essay on the First Principles of Government* (2nd ed., London, 1771), p. 5. For Gibbon's opinion of Priestley, see *Letters*, II, pp. 320-23; DF, chap. 54, the concluding footnote; *Memoirs*, pp. 171-72.

¹⁰DF, chap. 71, p. 308. See also n. 69, below.

¹¹DF, chap. 2, p. 51.

¹²DF, chap. 3, p. 78.

¹³William Robertson, "View of the Progress of Society in Europe . . .," *History of the Reign of Charles V*, Section I (originally published in 1769; see *Works* [London, 1851], III, p. 9).

¹⁴*The English Essays of Edward Gibbon*, ed. Patricia B. Craddock (Oxford, 1972): ". . . from the civil wars, that ensued after the fall of Nero, or even from the tyranny that succeeded the reign of Augustus."

¹⁵DF, chap. 1, p. 1.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁹*Arte* could mean both "art" and "guild" or "trade."

²⁰DF, chap. 3, pp. 60-61; 70-72.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 60; cf. chap. 18, p. 204.

²²DF, chap. 3, pp. 78-79.

²³DF, chap. 1, p. 9.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁵E.g., DF, chap. 5, pp. 111, 118; chap. 6, pp. 166, 168; chap. 7, p. 194; chap. 11, pp. 283, 292, 313, 315; chap. 12, pp. 376-77. In chaps. 11-13 the emphasis lies on the Illyrian peasant origins of the emperors between Claudius Gothicus and Diocletian.

²⁶DF, chap. 1, p. 10.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁸See n. 25, above.

²⁹DF, chap. 1, p. 15, n. 61. Cf. "General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West," following chap. 38, pp. 166-67, where it is remarked that modern armies have transformed warfare by "arts which survive and supply the decay of military virtue" and must "be accompanied . . . with a proportionable improvement in the arts of peace and civil policy," rendering virtue in the antique sense no longer necessary.

³⁰DF, chap. 1, p. 16.

³¹DF, chap. 7, pp. 193-94.

³²The most recent study is that of R. L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge, 1975).

³³DF, chap. 9, p. 218.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 220.

³⁵His correspondence with Sheffield and others, especially while he lived at Lausanne, is concerned with the income to be derived either from his estates or from their sale.

³⁶DF, chap. 9, p. 213: "the first of historians who applied the science of philosophy to the study of facts."

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 221.

³⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 219-20.

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 225-26.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁴³Gibbon's italics.

⁴⁴DF, chap. 9, p. 223.

⁴⁵DF, chap. 2, p. 53.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 54-56.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁴⁸DF, chap. 27, p. 186.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 187.

⁵⁰DF, chap. 31, p. 321.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁵³*Ibid.*, n. 51.

⁵⁴DF, "General Observations," p. 163.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 163-67.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 165-66.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 166 and n. 8.

⁵⁹See J. F. Crowley, *That Sheba Self: The Conceptualization of Commercial Life in the American Colonies* (Baltimore, 1972).

⁶⁰DF, chap. 26, p. 71.

⁶¹Meek, cited in n. 32.

⁶²See, e.g., *Lectures on Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms*, I, chap. 1, pt. 2.

⁶³DF, chap. 26, pp. 74-75, 79-81, 84-91; chap. 34, pp. 416-23; chap. 38, pp. 164-67; chap. 42, pp. 349-52, 354-57; chap. 48, pp. 172-73; chap. 57, pp. 224-27, 229-33; chap. 64, pp. 1-22; chap. 65, pp. 42-70. De Guignes's *Histoire des Huns* was a major resource, and Gibbon's references to Chinese history would repay study.

⁶⁴DF, chap. 38, pp. 129, 132, 164.

⁶⁵DF, chap. 2, p. 53.

⁶⁶See the Preface to the first volume, dated February 1, 1776, p. v-vii in the Bury edition.

⁶⁷DF, chap. 2, p. 58.

⁶⁸DF, chap. 16, pp. 138-39.

⁶⁹DF, chap. 71, pp. 308-9. The context is that of the destruction of Roman monuments: "In the preceding volumes of this history, I have described the triumph of barbarism and religion; and I can only resume, in a few words, their real or imaginary connexion with the ruin of ancient Rome" (i.e., the city).

⁷⁰DF, chap. 50, p. 316.